Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) In a method using a color value as information with respect to an image region, a representative color designating method, comprising:

<u>determining a representative color value in a color space that represents the image region; and</u>

~~a step for~~ expressing a reliability of the representative color value as color information of the image region together with the representative color value ~~which~~ <u>that</u> represents the image region<u>, wherein said reliability is determined based on color differences between each color value for each color space component of pixels in the image region and the representative color value for a corresponding color space component.</u>

2.   (New) In a method using a color value as information with respect to an image region, a representative color designating method, comprising:

determining a representative color value in a color space that represents the image region; and

expressing a reliability of the representative color value as color information of the image region together with the representative color value that represents the image region, wherein said reliability is determined based on a value proportional to squared color differences

between each color value for each color space component of pixels in the image region and the representative color value for a corresponding color space component.

3.   (New) In a method using a color value as information with respect to an image region, a representative color designating method, comprising:

determining a representative color value in a color space that represents the image region; and

expressing a reliability of the representative color value as color information of the image region together with the representative color value that represents the image region, wherein said reliability is determined based on distances in the color space between each color value of pixels in the image region and the representative color value.

4.   (New) In a method for using a color value as an information with respect to an image region, a local representative color designation method, comprising:

segmenting an image region into n x m local regions; and

expressing a reliability of a representative color as a color information of each segmented local region together with the representative color that represents said each segmented local region, wherein said reliability is determined based on color differences between each color value for each color space component of a plurality of pixels in a segmented local region and the representative color value for a corresponding color space component.

5. (New) In a method for using a color value as an information with respect to an image region, a local representative color designation method, comprising:

segmenting an image region into n x m local regions; and

expressing a reliability of a representative color as a color information of each segmented local region together with the representative color that represents said each segmented local region, wherein said reliability is determined based on a value proportional to squared color differences between each color value for each color space component of a plurality of pixels in a segmented local region and the representative color value for a corresponding color space component.

6. (New) In a method for using a color value as an information with respect to an image region, a local representative color designation method, comprising:

segmenting an image region into n x m local regions; and

expressing a reliability of a representative color as a color information of each segmented local region together with the representative color that represents said each segmented local region, wherein said reliability is determined based on distances in the color space between at least one color value of a plurality of pixels in a segmented local region and the representative color value.